The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news, accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains labor information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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A thought is an idea in transit.—Pythagoras.

WHOLE NO. 1413 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, MAY 14, 1938 | FRANK MORRISON, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 28, NO. 20

All Aboard For Mammoth Union Label Exposition at Cincinnati, May 16-21

Ornburn Says Exhibition Will Boom Sale of Goods Made and Services Rendered by Union Men and Women, Promote Prosperity in All Parts of the Country, and Aid "Employers Who Believe in Maintaining the Fairest Wages and Best Working Conditions."

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

Cincinnati, Ohio.—Arrangements are completed for the big American Federation of Labor Union Label and Industrial Exhibition to be held in Cincinnati next week—May 16 to 21 inclusive.

Director General I. M. Ornburn, who is also secretary-treasurer of the A. F. of L. Union Label Trades Department, stated that he was pleased to announce that this first national Union Label Exhibition will be one of the outstanding events in the business as well as the labor world.

"Increased purchasing power," said Mr. Ornburn, "is the only remedy for business depressions. No movement has done more to increase the American standards and prevent higher wages with which to maintain these standards than the American Federation of Labor. The gravest problem that confronts our country today is that, in many instances many millions of workers have reached the point of bare subsistence. With diminishing employment, they cannot buy the accumulated products of our accelerated industries.

"This Union Label and Industrial Exhibition is being given for those employers who believe in maintaining the fairest wages and best working conditions. We recommend our exhibitors to the consumer-public because they are the manufacturers who are sustaining American standards, helping to return their nation to prosperity. And greatest of all, these union-label industries are doing more to preserve democratic institutions than any other group of industries.

"The greatest assurance that can be given to American and Unionized industries is to have a large attendance at the A. F. of L. Union Label and Industrial Exhibition. The American people generally, as well as organized workers, owe a debt of gratitude to our Union-minded exhibitors, and should prove it by always demanding Union-made merchandise.

"This Exhibition of Union Label, Union and American-made products can be translated into a powerful and sustained buying action. The preparation of timely and appealing merchandise into stacks-to-the-ceiling exhibits so that consumers may see them is the first step. But in addition, the members of Labor Press and Women's Auxiliaries will carry a Catalogue-Directory of picturized products and information regarding their merit and quality into millions of homes throughout America."

Mayor Stewart Proclaims Union Label Week In Cincinnati

Jack Hurst, left, President of the Cincinnati Central Labor Council, and I. M. Ornburn, right, Director General of the forthcoming Union Label and Industrial Exhibition in Cincinnati, looking on with approval at the Mayor's office as Mayor James G. Stewart affixed seal and signature to a proclamation of Union Label Week in that city. The week is to be observed May 16-21, at the time of the Exhibition in Cincinnati's famous Music Hall.

A. F. of L. Cooperation With Business Revealed by Big Union Label Exhibition

President Green, Praising the Union-Made Goods Show Opening at Cincinnati May 16, Says the American Federation of Labor Is Going Into Merchandising and Plans to "Deliver the Union Market to Worthy American Business Men Who Employ Members of Unions Affiliated With the A. F. of L."

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

Washington, D. C.—William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, in a statement here, declared that the Union Label and Industrial Exhibition, opening May 16 in Cincinnati, Ohio, and continuing through the week, will afford the entire nation an outstanding and concrete example of how labor is cooperating with business in promoting a larger market for goods made and services rendered by working men and women employed under the high standards secured by trade unions.

"The four million members of the American Federation of Labor," he said, "are always glad to cooperate with business men who recognize the right of workers to organize and who adhere to the principles of collective bargaining. We fully appreciate the support we receive from unionized industries and other business establishments that recognize the A. F. of L. type of unionism.

"Organized labor wants to reciprocate. Specifically, its members and their families and friends plan to do this by spending their money only with firms that have a right to display the union label—the trademark of American labor.

"The American Federation of Labor is going into the merchandising business. We propose to deliver the union market to worthy American business men who employ members of unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. We expect to educate the American public to use union-labeled products and union-conducted services.

To the Cincinnati exhibition will come delegates from the American Federation of Labor, Central Labor Unions, Auxiliaries of Labor, a mighty army of 2,000,000 wives, sisters, daughters and friends of A. F. of L. members; delegates from the 104 international and national unions of the A. F. of L.; delegates from the Railway Labor Executives' Department, representing 23,000 local unions, 300,000 members of cooperating railroad unions and more than a million cooperating farmers. It is estimated that the union labor market these delegates represent spend more than six billion dollars of union-earned money a year for living needs.

In addition to labor delegates, hundreds of representatives of union label industries will attend the exhibition. President William Green will deliver a nationally broadcast address from the exhibition on May 20.

EDITORIALS

Wages and Hours Bill Would End These Starvation-Pay Envelopes

With consideration of the Federal Wages and Hours Bill by the present Congress guaranteed through the action of 218 Representatives signing the resolution to discharge the Rules Committee, which by a vote of 8 to 6 had denied members of the House the right to vote on the measure, from their control of the bill and placing it directly before the House membership, it is interesting to note the effect which the enactment of the bill into statute law will have on the wages of low-paid employees.

It is quite generally claimed that the measure would to a large degree be limited to the Southern States. The inaccuracy of this view is shown in the statement by Representative Hamilton Fish of New York in presenting to the House of Representatives reliable information he received about low wages paid to mill workers in that State. The pay data was presented to the New York State members of Congress in a special committee meeting by a number of the underpaid workers themselves.

Following that the New York members of Congress in a special committee meeting had been presented with low-wage data by a number of underpaid New York workers, Mr. Fish said:

"I have always known something about the economic conditions in my own State, but I found out I was woefully ignorant of the deplorable and tragic conditions existing in my State," Mr. Fish said. "I knew that certain wage earners there were paid $8, $9, $10, and $12 a week, yes, but these people brought in slips and presented them to our committee showing where they had received 10 cents an hour, 12 cents an hour, 14 cents an hour, $6 a week, and $6 a week. I would not have believed it if some Member had gotten up on the floor of the House and made such a statement. I was under the impression that paid from $12 to $15 a week sweatshops. But these facts are as I have stated them."

Asserting that he believed "the rank and file of the American people want to put an end to the terrible conditions of our wage earners in the sweatshops who are being exploited by human vultures," Mr. Fish announced his full and complete support of the pending wages and hours bill as a practical means to realize this objective.

Representative Fish is right. The Wages and Hours Bill, unanimously supported by the officials and members of the American Federation of Labor, would definitely end the starvation wages cited by the New York Congressman by providing a universal, nation-wide minimum rate of pay of 25 cents per hour with a provision that it shall be increased to 40 cents an hour within a period of three years. It will also and abnormally long hours imposed on employees through the provision which fixes a maximum work week of 44 hours with a provision that it be reduced to 40 hours within a period of two years.

These virtues of the bill have been trenchantly set forth by President William Green of the American Federation of Labor, who said:

"No employer and no member of Congress from any section of the country can dare to object that a minimum wage of $11 or $12 a week would be an oppressive imposition on American industry. Any industry which depends for survival on sweatshop wages and sweatshop conditions of labor should cease to exist in the public interest. Sweatshop labor is like an infection which spreads its paralyzing poison through the whole physical and economic system of the nation. It has been outlawed by public opinion. It should be outlawed by statute.

"Every member of Congress, regardless of party affiliation," Mr. Green added, "should vote for this new Wage our Hour Bill."

The Chamber of Commerce Remains Reactionary

The U. S. Chamber of Commerce at its recent session in the Nation's Capital was presented with an unusual opportunity to make an approach to friendliness for organized labor and thereby set in motion the machinery to soften the bitterness that characterizes labor-capital relations in many parts of our country. But what the New York Times calls "Business in Convention" utterly failed to grasp its opportunity.

The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, in session in Washington during the meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, in a statement setting forth the "basic aims" of labor, declared that "collective bargaining, private initiative, private ownership, private property, and a fair profit for those who own and operate our system of production and distribution.

Declaring that the "working people must be accorded the right to organize and bargain collectively" the Executive Council pointed out that "Labor and capital can cooperate, develop efficiency and production through labor organization as developed by the trade unions, and the organization of industry as developed by industrial management," adding:

"Through the development of basic work between industry and labor, many economic wrongs can be righted, many of industry's legislative burdens can be remedied, and the maximum of service which industry and labor may render can be given the American nation."

With this statement of fundamentals as a basis the Executive Council invited industry to "discard the weapons of industrial warfare," urged the "extension of cooperation and understanding between labor and industry," pledged labor's support for peace and progress in industry.

But the Chamber of Commerce adopted an ambiguous resolution saying that "management and labor should have direct recourse to the Federal Government" on certain things of "common concern." Another resolution opposed any Federal wage and hour legislation, and to climax its record the Chamber in a third resolution demanded the repeal of the National Labor Relations Act, which, even though it is being badly administered, guarantees by law the right of the workers to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and whose retention as a Federal law is one of the demands of the American Federation of Labor.

There was no mention of organized labor, no mention of trade unionism, no mention of collective bargaining, no condemnation of company unions, labor spies, strike-breaking thugs, or tear gas and other forms of terrorism by private police in labor disputes.

Even the conservative Washington Post, which has not been sparing in its criticism of the National Labor Relations Act, strongly condemned the Chamber's demand for the abolition of that measure. "It is already evident, thanks to the courts," the Post said, "that future administration of this law will be more even-handed. For organized employers to press for outright repeal of the measure under these circumstances inevitably discourages the cooperative attitude that is so desirable for recovery."

Nearly four million members of unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor are employed by thousands of progressive business men who have long since recognized that organized labor on a nation-wide scale is here to stay and who have found that trade unions based on agreements democratically negotiated and faithfully observed can be of great assistance in working out industry's problems. These problems cannot be solved in an area deluged with distrust. The American Federation of Labor, through its Executive Council, tried to remove the obstacles to friendly industrial relations and pave the way for cooperation between management and the workers.

It is regretted that the U. S. Chamber of Commerce assumed a negative attitude toward the Federation's constructive proposals.

A. F. of L. Unions Mobilized to Promote Unionization of White Collar Workers

Organization Drive Has Already Increased to Seventy-Five the Number of Locals Affiliated With Office Employes International Council, President Weikel Says.

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

Washington, D. C.—As a vital part of the work undertaken by the American Federation of Labor to bring the many thousands of unorganized white collar workers into affiliation with the organized labor movement, Frank Weikel, president of the American Federation of Office Employes International Council, reports that the eight hundred central labor unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor to inaugurate office employes union membership campaigns in every community.

"The American Federation of Labor is engaged in an intensive organizing drive among white collar workers employed in private industry," Mr. Weikel said in a letter addressed to the secretaries of the central labor unions.

"There are now affiliated with the A. F. of L. seventy-five local unions of this class of wage earners," he continued.

"If such a local union is in existence in your city, the purpose of this communication is to request the cooperation and assistance of your Central Body in enlisting or bringing within the A. F. of L. these unorganized groups of white collar workers who are outside the fold. Many Central Bodies, through their organization committees, have materially assisted these local unions in increasing their membership by cooperation in organizing drives and collective bargaining negotiations. This valuable assistance on the part of Central Bodies affiliated with the A. F. of L. is deeply appreciated.

"On the other hand, if no such local union of office employes affiliated with the A. F. of L. is in existence in your city, your Central Body can lend valuable assistance in initiating an organization drive at the present time.

"There are 2,000 workers coming daily to A. F. of L. headquarters for information and literature that may be used in conducting a drive for organization of white collar workers. We have on hand at headquarters an ample supply of such literature which will be gladly sent upon request.

"The assistance of your Central Body in bringing within the fold of the A. F. of L. the unorganized white collar workers in your community will be of tremendous mutual benefit."

Battle Creek Cereal Workers Wage Firm Fight Against Anti-Union Post Company

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

Battle Creek, Mich.—The struggle of the Cereal Workers Union No. 20977 Cereal Workers and Allied Industries, affiliated with the National Council of Grain Processors, against the anti-union policy of the Post Company here, a subsidiary of General Foods Corporation, is receiving such whole-hearted support from organized labor generally that union employees are confident of ultimate victory for justice for the employes of the company.

Following long continued opposition of the Post Company to enter into an agreement that would safeguard the rights of the employes, Federal Union No. 20977 announced on January 27 that it had placed the company on the unfair list and urged other A. F. of L. unions to assist them in their fight. The action of the Federal Labor Union was endorsed by the Battle Creek Federation of Labor and the National Grain Processors Council.

According to Meyer L. Lewis, president of the Grain Processors Council, General Foods Corporation, which it is alleged has manifested unwillingness to favor the unionization of its subsidiary, manufactures the following products: Post Toasties, Bakers Cocoanut, Bakers Chocolate, Minute Tapioca, Jell-O, Grape Nuts, Grape Nut Flakes, Post's 40% Bran Flakes, Instant Postum, Sanka, Maxwell House Coffee, Jell-O, Certo, LaFrance, Satina, Diamond Salt, Minute Rice, and other products.

Mr. Lewis pointed out that the products of W. K. Kellogg, General Mills, and Ralston Purina, covering much the same field as those of General Foods Corporation and its subsidiary, the Post Company, are union made in accordance with A. F. of L. standards.

Democratic Regulation of Marketing Agricultural Products

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

The marketing procedure applied in Federal regulations for marketing farm products is revealed in the announcement of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration of the U. S. Department of Agriculture that the Administration had dropped the proposed marketing agreement program for onion sets produced in the lower Lake Michigan area.

The agreement was submitted to the AAA by representatives of the growers and shippers of onion sets in the area involved—Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin. The program called for the establishment of a committee of growers and shippers which recommends the amount of onion sets to be regulated by grades and sizes. It also provided for compilation and distribution of marketing information to growers and shippers and the elimination of unfair trade practices. Onion sets with a guarantee against price decline.

In order to safeguard majority rule the statute law authorizing the marketing agreements provides that before an agreement can go into effect it must be approved by handlers of at least 50 per cent of the volume of the commodity involved and by at least two-thirds of the growers or by growers of two-thirds of the commodity in the producing area.

In the case of the onion sets marketing program, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration held a public hearing on the proposal, and then sent it to onion sets growers and shippers for their signatures. But, to use the language of the AAA announcement, "The support for the program as determined by grower votes and shippers' signatures to the agreement was not sufficient to permit making it effective under the provisions of the Marketing Act of 1937." Consequently the plan for the proposed agreement was dropped.

HERSHEY EMPLOYES WON BY A. F. OF L. UNION

Bakery and Confectionery Workers Organizing Chocolate Company's Big Plant After C. I. O. Fiasco; Over Two Thousand Involved.

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

Washington, D. C.—The destructive tendencies of the Committee for Industrial Organization and the absolutely unsound practices of unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor are well illustrated in the information contained in the following telegram received by President William Green of the A. F. of L. from A. J. Myrup, secretary-treasurer of the Bakery and Confectionery Workers, International Union of America from the union's national headquarters at Chicago:

"We are pleased to advise you that after a year's experience with irresponsible and raiding C. I. O. leadership and inexperienced company union leadership the employes of the Hershey Chocolate Company have turned to the A. F. of L. and have been duly organized by our International Union. Approximately 2,500 workers are involved. Again it is proven that dual unionism and raiding tactics do not pay."

The Hershey Chocolate Company is located at Hershey, Pa.

The trouble created by officials of the Bakery and Confectionery Union revealed that following a long seated dispute with extreme company and employer interference, but moved by a desire for self-help a number of the Hershey employes applied for a charter from the Bakery Union in February, 1937. But before the union was firmly established the C. I. O. broke into Hershey and with "high sounding phrases" and fraudulent promises raided and captured this group of workers," whereupon the boss tide A. F. of L. Bakery Union withdrew from Hershey and left them to the C. I. O. crowd.

But after one whole year's experience with the irresponsible C. I. O. leadership and equally irresponsible company union leadership the Hershey employes eventually turned to responsible and constructive A. F. of L. leadership under the Bakery and Confectionery Workers' International Union, and it is reported that a majority of the company's employes will soon be signed up into union cards.

The developments leading up to the successful organization campaign among the Hershey Company employes have been under the direct supervision of International Secretary-Treasurer A. A. Myrup of the Bakery and Confectionery Workers' International Union, assisted by several international representatives, Charles McClosky, Business Representative of Local No. 113.

BRITISH SEAMEN'S HEAD VISITS AFL OFFICIALS

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

Washington, D. C.—W. H. Spence, C. B. E., general secretary of the British National Union of Seamen, was a recent visitor at the American Federation of Labor headquarters here, calling on President William Green, Secretary-Treasurer Frank Morrison and other high union officials whose offices are in the A. F. of L. Building.

Mr. Spence, on behalf of his union, is a member of the International Federation of Trade Unions and secretary of the British Trade Union Congress.

Executive Council's Statement

Following is the statement of the position of the American Federation of Labor which Mr. Green sent to Mr. Citrine:

"The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor will be glad to learn that the plan of admitting the so-called unions of Soviet Russia to the International Federation of Trade Unions has been set aside, at least by the executive committee of the International Federation of Trade Unions at least for the time being.

"It appears, however, that the rejection of the project at this time has not been based upon the principle which is involved but upon the conditions which the Russian organizations had attached to the proposal. We, therefore, feel it our duty to declare ourselves unequivocally against the proposal.

Russian Unions Do Not Have Real Freedom

"Sufficient ground for our objection is found in the fact that the Russian organizations in question are not free unions in the sense that term bears in every democratic country and which it has always and everywhere borne until the rise of dictatorships since the World War. They have no more freedom of action than have the official organizations commonly known as 'Labor Fronts' in Italy, Germany, and Austria. Like these, they are in effect a mere part of the administrative machinery of the dictatorial regime.

"Free trade unions and governmentally controlled 'labor fronts' are as incompatible as are democracy and dictatorship in the State. The attempt to combine them in the international can result only in confusion, internal strife and disaster. The affiliation of Labor will take no part in such a suicidal venture.

A. F. of L. Is Committed to Free Trade Unionism

"Organized labor in the United States is firmly committed to the maintenance of free trade unionism as well as of freedom in the political field. It has already suffered too much at the hands of advocates or agents of the dictatorial Trade Union Con-gress. It will be blind to the danger involved in any compromise with them.

"Should the Russian organizations become a part of the International Federation of Trade Unions we have no doubt that the American Federation of Labor will feel compelled to withdraw. It would deeply regret such a calamity of the bonds that connect it with trade unionism beyond the sea. We earnestly hope that the occasion will not rise."

Membership of Russian Red Unions In World Trade Union Federation

Question Will Be Considered at Oslo Meeting May 16; Opposition Voiced by American Federation of Labor.

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

The General Council meeting of the International Federation of Trade Unions which opens at Oslo, Norway, May 16, will consider the question of admission of the Trade Union Centre of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with the International Federation, with which the American Federation of Labor is affiliated.

Matthew Woll, third vice president of the American Federation of Labor, will represent the A. F. of L. at the Oslo meeting.

The question of the affiliation of the Russian Trade Unions has been before the Executive of the I. F. T. U. for a number of months. The proposed affiliation was disapproved by the Executive at that time, but only temporarily, final determination being reserved for the Oslo meeting.

Affiliation Opposed by A. F. of L. Executive Council

The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor already voiced its opposition to accepting the Soviet Russian organizations into membership as a member of the I.F.T.U. At its meeting in Washington, D. C., January 24 to February 23, 1938, the Council considered the proposed affiliation and stated that if the international trade union movement of Soviet Russia is admitted into the International Federation of Trade Unions the A. F. of L. will feel compelled to withdraw" from the I.F.T.U.

The Executive Council authorized President William Green of the American Federation of Labor, to transmit the following views to Sir Walter Citrine, president of the International Federation of Trade Unions and secretary of the British Trade Union Congress.

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COUNCIL IS ORGANIZED BY GRAIN PROCESSORS

Area Covered by New Group Includes Iowa, Illinois and Eastern Missouri.

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

The organization of a National Council of Grain Processors and Allied Industries, a body of A. F. of L. affiliates, report that the Tri-State Joint Council, recently formed by a delegate meeting at Decatur, Illinois, is achieving considerable success.

The States represented at the Decatur meeting were Iowa, Illinois and Eastern Missouri. Union delegates were present from Chicago, East St. Louis, Mascoutah, Springfield, Decatur, Pekin, Alton and Granite City, all in Illinois, Clinton and Keokuk, Iowa and St. Louis, Missouri.

60,000 CALIFORNIA CANNERY WORKERS COVERED BY A. F. OF L. AGREEMENT

Hours, Wages, Seniority, Sunday Closing and Exclusive Bargaining Agent Provisions Are Included in Largest Blanket Union Contract Ever Negotiated in the "Eldorado State."

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

Positive assurance of labor peace in northern and central California's great fruit and canning industry has been given by the terms of agreement between representatives of the American Federation of Labor cannery workers unions and the California Processors and Growers, Inc.

Negotiations which resulted in the agreement were conducted for the union affiliates of the A. F. of L. by Edward D. Vandeleur, secretary of the California State Federation of Labor; James A. Glenn, attorney for the Federation; Federation of Labor and a committee representing the various local unions. The California cannery operators were represented by the California Processors and Growers Association, headed by J. Paul St. Sure and Harrison Robinson, Oakland attorneys.

The unions affected are A. F. of L. Cannery Workers Unions in San Francisco, northern Alameda County (Oakland), southern Alameda County (Hayward), Santa Clara County, Sacramento, Stockton area, Yuba and Sutter Counties, including Marysville, Richland, Benicia, Rio Vista, Modesto and Kingsburg.

The blanket agreement, covering 60,000 cannery workers, is said to be the largest union contract ever negotiated in California. It recognizes the union (which is defined as meaning "the California State Federation of Labor and the cannery workers union which has adopted this agreement") as exclusive bargaining agent for the employes.

Hours are limited to a basic ten-hour day with an exception that seasonable products not more than 12 hours can be worked in any one day or not more than 66 hours in any one week without the payment of time and one-half for overtime.

Time and one-half will also be paid for all work done on Sunday, except in processing peas and asparagus which are short season crops and highly perishable.

There are also provisions for equitable rules governing seniority which is the main provide for preference to those longest employed. The seniority rules do not apply to certain key employes with regard to whom the management retains freedom of choice.

There is also a provision for the daily rotation of work among regular employes when such rotation will not interfere with efficiency of operation.

The wage rate was continued as in the previous year, with the provision that a wage differential for rural plants would be given further consideration.

The new agreement, effective May 1, was signed in behalf of the California State Federation of Labor by Edward D. Vandeleur, secretary, for the unions, and by William H. Hudson, president, and Ralph Henderson, secretary, for the California Processors and Growers, Inc., in behalf of the 91 canneries affiliated therewith.